

Life Lessons 101

by Winds of Inspiration

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Summary: He lost a part of him. Now he was a freak. She had trouble controlling her temper. Most people are downright scared of her. Yet neither one is brave enough to face it. They seek each other out for friendship and it is not until they meet that they realize they have known each other all along and must do what they can to keep their new secret. Hiccstrid Modern AU. Rated T

1. How To Save a Life

****Hello everyone! It's Windy here and welcome to "Life Lessons 101"**

****Hope you all enjoy and leave whatever feedback/constructive criticism you can in the reviews and a shout out to my beta, the one and only P-Artsypants! Check out all of her work it is awesome!**

****Now on with the story! ****

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****Chapter One: How to Save a Life****

"And where did I go wrong? I lost a friend
>Somewhere along in the bitterness
>And I would have stayed up with you all night
>Had I known how to save a life"- The Fray

Those three minutes of that night four or so months ago never stopped playing on eternal repeat in his head every time he went to sleep: jogging on the sidewalk with Toothless's leash in his hand, when suddenly his dog seemed to be urging them to go faster though they were being chased.

In the end they might as well have been chased. Hearing the desperate pleas of the three-legged black dog fade slowly as he suddenly felt as though his body spontaneously shut down into darkness. What felt like an average night of sleep had really been five days when his awareness of the world, returned. He somehow ended up in a bed attached to a monitor by the wrist and donned a papery gown during the time he was stuck in blackness. The moment he felt a sudden itch at his left foot and leaned down to scratch was when his world turned to glass, shattering into a thousand pieces. The itch was nothing more than a ghost of the past, of something that was no longer a part of him and his mundane life.

The past summer was one of nothing but learning to take it in as his new reality. Waking up, strapping on his prosthetic, taking a cab to physical therapy, attending physical therapy, returning home, taking Toothless for a five minute walk, and sketching. He would finally become too exhausted to keep drawing dragons and thinking of spray paint designs for his motorcycle and would reluctantly go to sleep, where he would be revisited by excerpts of the very moment things changed.

Now with summer nearing its end, his completion of physical therapy, and finally receiving a prosthetic that would allow him to use his motorcycle once again, he still needed to work. Before the accident he worked for a biomedical engineering firm where they created prosthetics for animals and people. However, any time the thought of returning to that specific job, all he could feel was a tightening in his stomach and lump climbing from his chest to his throat. Though he had grown accustomed to no longer having a real foot, he could not handle trying to help others regain a part of themselves when in reality, he was the last person qualified. If anything his metal leg made him feel like a freak. Weird. Different. Unworthy. Alone.

True Toothless had a fake back left leg and his godfather, being a veteran, had a prosthetic arm and leg, but he still felt there was something that made him feel blockaded from the rest of the world because of it. Soon enough, his godfather, Craig Gobber, paid him a visit.

"Hiccup my boy! How have you been?" He said as he gave the young man a suffocating hug. When he finally released him, he said, "Could be better, but I'd say I've gotten used to it." Hiccup then proceeded to lead Gobber to the inside of the apartment where he was greeted by the jumps of a certain black dog.

"Well someone is very happy to see me, aren't yah?" he said to the dog who was running around like a child on Christmas morning. Just before Hiccup could offer a beverage Gobber beat him to the chase, "Hiccup, your father and I are concerned." Rolling his eyes Hiccup threw his hands in the air, "My father is actually concerned? Well that is news!"

"I'm serious lad. He may be busy but he still caresâ€¦ he just has his own way of showing it!" he said with a smile that only failed in reassuring Hiccup.

"Sure thing Gobber. That explains all the frantic text messages that I have not been getting from himâ€¦." Knowing it was a fight he wasn't going to win, Gobber took a breath and continued, "Look

Hiccup, your pal Fishlegs told me how you filed for leave of absence from the firm." Now Hiccup really did not feel like having this discussion with Gobber about how he was making a stupid decision and only making things worse for himself. What came next surprised him, "I understand where you're coming from. When I lost my arm and leg it wasn't easy. Even with the second time it was only harder to readjust than it was the first time around, but you can't be cooped up in here, you have to get a different job in the mean time so you can get out and be able to pay bills in the meantime." Still avoiding eye contact, Hiccup looked down and saw Toothless resting on his good foot. "Gobber, at this point there is nothing I can do for a job. Everything is probably already taken and I'm not sure how many places will be hiring this late." He then saw that grin from earlier return to Gobber's face as he said, "I am!" This caused Hiccup to jolt upward and reciprocate the eye contact.

"What exactly do you mean?" After releasing a short chuckle Gobber elaborated, "One of Professors in the History department quit last week and I've needed a replacement fast. It's only for one class: Viking History and Mythology and seeing as you did minor in History I thought you would be interested."

Hiccup looked away again, taking a deep breath he thought about it. A teaching job would be easy going enough, but a few things troubled him: First he had only graduated from that very college over a year ago, second despite his minor he was not so sure if he could successfully teach a class about Vikings seeing as he would need to do some studying himself in the two weeks left before the beginning of the first semester and finally: how was the commute going to work out? As far as he was concerned it was between forty-five minutes to hour between his apartment and the University of Berk. Turning back to his godfather, Hiccup inquired, "Sounds good but I have a few questions. For one thing: how am I going to be prepared to teach the material and how to teach it with only two weeks until the school year resumes? Also, how am I going to get there on time every day? My bike can probably only go so far if I am to make it on time." Gobber then reached into his satchel with his good hand and handed Hiccup a few papers at a time, "This here is the syllabus and all the information you will need to cover and prepare so you can be ready. And this here is your schedule as well as your contract. You will begin Wednesday after Labor Day weekend." Before Hiccup could think of anymore objections to the offer his eyes were quickly drawn to the sign of several digits featured behind a specific currency sign near the bottom of the contract. Any words that he originally had in mind had quickly escaped at the sight.

"This isn't some public elementary school you're working for, it's a University! Of course you'll have higher numbers!" At this point, Hiccup knew there was no way out of this discussion that would end in him rejecting the contract. Without a word, he found a pen and signed the contract, which Gobber accepted with a grin taking over his face.

"Excellent choice Hiccup!" said Gobber as he gave Hiccup a less than gentle pat on the back, causing the younger man to lean over a bit to catch kitchen table to avoid falling.

"Great! I guess I'll see youâ€¦."

"In two to three weeks,"

"Umm, yeah of course! Then."

With that, Gobber left the apartment with a signed contract in hand. As soon as the door closed Hiccup let himself fall onto the couch. Toothless quickly joined, sitting over both his legs, causing Hiccup to sit up and pet his head.

"Well bud, looks like we've got our work cut out for us!" he sighed as he gazed at the ceiling. Even though he now had a job, Hiccup still felt the void in his mind grow in diameter and circumference. Though it was a void with a feeling he had been adapting to and it started to seem as if there were no use in filling it any time soon. Not too long afterwards, he sat up to retrieve his laptop from the bedroom desk. It was the moment he opened up his laptop that Henry Harrison Haddock III got an idea.

He may be alone among those he knows, but there are some things, such as computers, that provide little doors that when opened unleash unlimited access to the myriad of endless corners in the universe; souls as lonely as his own needing someone to talk to as well. Toothless whimpered curiously at his owner causing him to release a chuckle and state out loud, "I think my research can wait for few more minutes."

2. Fake It

**Hello sorry for the late update there is just a pesky little thing called life that gets in the way, but do not fret! I will persist with this story! Also the first couple of chapters will be short because of setting up but once the plot really gets in motion then y'all shall see significantly longer chapters. Thanks to my beta: P-Artsypants who's Mer!Hiccup AU "What The Water Gave Me" is super awesome and definitely worth checking out! :) **

**Enjoy! **

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**Chapter Two: Fake It **

"Who's to know if your soul will fade at all?
>The one you sold to fool the world
>You lost your self-esteem along the way"- Seether

The cool mud splashing upon her sneakers and socks, only to leave some stains on her ankles; the oppressive sun beating upon the back of her neck and every other part of her skin that failed to remain shielded; the way she wielded her lacrosse stick like a battle axe followed by her battle cry; all of that mixed in with the blood pumping adrenaline created one single sensation she loved more than anything.

Victory.

The knowledge that no one would dare cross her path without a scar or that she would be the expected to indulge in the glorious echoes of "Hofferson! Hofferson! Hofferson!" repeatedly. But she knew better

than to let such things distract her from her overall goal: lead her team to the title of "winners." Winning was and always had been her one-word gospel, her key to open the door to her future.

But of course she let something small within snap. She just had to throw away everything she had spent the past school year trying to practice because she could not handle what in hindsight was harmless taunting from the team captain, Cami Bogg. Thanks to application of physical over verbal language, Cami had a broken nose and thus she was suspended from summer conditioning and would not be allowed back on until she finished some more therapy sessions and the season officially resumed in the second semester.

With her Blue Lacy named Stormfly as her only company, the counting of days until she moved back in felt endless. As much as she loved her family, she would rather not be around to deal with the constant arguing over whether or not her Uncle Finn should be removed from life support. She loved her Uncle Finn deeply and saw him as the person she would go to for guidance before either of her parents. The last thing she wanted to deal with was having another issue to bring up at her mandated anger management therapy for the summer.

But now summer was almost over. She had been able to move in to the dorm room early. While it was not the same room as from her freshman year, she knew that as soon as her roommate arrived later today, it would be as if they never changed locations. With the giant poster of Kit Harrington from Game of Thrones that managed to survive all the kisses from her roommate, the moss green curtains she would bring from home, tennis gear, and collection of shed snake skin, it would feel a lot like they never changed their location. Yet even with a roommate like Ruth "Ruff" Thorston, she felt she could not take the risk of letting down her guard. She was a good source when it came to common interests and discussing social matters, but she was not completely comfortable with her, let alone anyone hear of her Uncle Finn's gradual fading from existence, the way money seemed to always avoid being within her family's reach, and of course the truth.

The truth that she was not allowed to be anything less than her best, her strongest. The truth that she had a duty to be perfect for the sake of her Uncle Finn, the sake of her parents, and the sake of herself. Being part of a lower-middle class family that was suffering financially due to current state of being of her Uncle Finn was anything but an easy chip to have on her shoulders. But no one wants to consider a girl who reveals such things to be hired for any future work and nor does being that kind of girl help in getting by with college. And yet, she was lonely. She knows that being lonely will keep her safe, but at the same time there is something about loneliness that boils her brain like burning water, trying to seep through the barricades she built long ago.

And it is because of said barricades that she had created that she knows she needs someone to talk to before she crashes. At least that was essentially what she had been told in therapy last month.

That was why she was sitting on her bed, looking at her phone, which just vibrated with the notification: You have a match! Breathing deeply, she positions her thumb to prepare to swipe and see the news for herself. Looking up at the ceiling and rolling her eyes, Astrid mutters to herself:

"Here's to hoping I'm not talking to a psychopathâ€|"

End
file.